DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 076 161 HE 004 149

AUTHOR	Chase, Clinton I.; And Others
TITLE	Pass-Fail: How Is It Working?
INSTITUTION	Indiana Univ., Bloomington. Bureau of Educational Studies and Testing.
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	32p.; Indiana Studies in Prediction No. 21
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Academic Standards; *Achievement Rating; College Faculty; College Students; *Higher Education; *Pass Fail Grading; Research; Research Projects; Student Attitudes; *Student Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	*Indiana University

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the pass/fail (P/F) grading system. A sample of 154 Indiana University students was interviewed. Half of the group, 77 students, had not taken any P/F courses. Of the remaining 77 students, 42% had taken only one P/F course and most of the rest from two to five courses. Results of the student interview questionnaire indicated that the general student attitude toward the P/F option is favorable. The faculty were polled by means of a structured personal interview consisting of 12 specific questions and a request for comment. Two thirds of the faculty favored retention of the P/F system, 18% advocated abolishing P/F, and 16% declined to answer. A review of the grade achievement of P/F students indicated the average grade was lower than for regularly enrolled students. Conclusions are listed. The general attitude of students and faculty is that the pass fail option should be continued. (KJM)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ED 076161

INDIANA UNIVERSITY / 1973

Pass–Fail: How Is It Working?

INDIANA STUDIES IN PREDICTION

NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE 004 709

Bureau of Educational Studies and Testing

ED 076161

Indiana Studies in Prediction No. 21

PASS-FAIL: HOW IS IT WORKING?

by

Clinton I. Chase
Starrette L. Dalton
Judith A. Doerann

Bureau of Educational Studies and Testing
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana
1973

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Description of the Student Sample	2
Student Interview Responses	3
Faculty Reaction to the Pass-Fail Option . . .	15
Grade Achievement of Pass-Fail Students . . .	19
Conclusions	21

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Frequency of Stated Majors in Categories	3
2	Student Interview Questionnaire on P/F System	4
3	Frequency of P/F Courses, General Categories	13
4	Faculty Interview Questionnaire	18
5	Distribution of Letter Grades for Regularly Enrolled and P/F Students in Three Large Classes	21

PASS-FAIL: HOW IS IT WORKING?

Introduction

Several alternatives to the standard A-B-C-D-F grading plan have emerged in recent years. Each is designed to compensate for some presumed limitation of the standard plan. One such alternative is known as the pass/fail (p/f) option. Here students enroll in a class and agree to take one of two grades. If the instructor turns in an A, B, C, or D, the Registrar records a P (or pass) on the student's record. If the instructor turns in an F, the Registrar records this grade for the student. Faculty members are not advised which students are taking the course under a p/f agreement or which are under the regular grading plan. Students currently may use the p/f option for nonmajor courses only.

Several advantages are proposed for the p/f system. Among these advantages are the following: because the risk of low grades destroying their grade-point average is clearly reduced, students are expected to attempt courses in areas in which they have little background; pressure is reduced on students by allowing them to devote less time to courses peripheral to their major without jeopardizing their academic records; and students avoid the problems associated with high levels of competition, e.g., cheating and avoidance of communication among students.

How is the p/f system working? Are the above listed purposes actually being obtained? Do faculty see the system operating the

same way as students see it? The following study was designed to explore these questions in some detail.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDENT SAMPLE

A sample of 154 Indiana University students was interviewed of these 13% were freshmen, 25% sophomores, 28% juniors, 21% seniors, and 14% graduate students. The group was about evenly divided between sexes; 53% of the sample was female, 47% was male.

To obtain as representative a sample as possible, the five interviewers employed were each instructed to obtain interviews in several types of locations, such as dorms, the library, the Union, cafeterias in dorms and the library, the Commons in the Union, a parking garage, a bookstore, and some fraternities and sororities.

Half of the group, 77 students, had not taken any courses p/f. Of 77 others, 42% had taken only one course p/f and most of the rest from two to five courses.

Table 1 summarizes the academic majors reported by the student sample; the total is greater than 154 because some students stated double majors. A complete listing of majors is found in Table A in the Appendix; in that table the frequencies are also broken down into numbers of those who have and have not taken courses p/f.

Table 1. Frequency of Stated Majors in Categories

Major Area	Number of Persons Listing Major	% of Majors Listed
Undecided	8	4.9
Business	13	8.0
Education	23	14.1
English	5	3.1
Fine Arts	20	12.3
HPER	4	2.5
Languages	10	6.1
Natural Sciences	26	16.0
Social Sciences	40	24.5
Other	14	8.6

STUDENT INTERVIEW RESPONSES

The student interview questionnaire was comprised of 28 items. Nineteen items were asked of all students whether or not they had taken courses p/f. The remaining nine were asked only of students who had taken the p/f option. Results for all items in percentages for each response are reported for the total sample and for two groups, those who had and those who had not taken courses p/f. The results of the questionnaire are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Student Interview Questionnaire on P/F System

(P/F = responses of students who had taken at least one p/f course; no p/f = responses of students who had not used the p/f option.)

Question	Total Sample (%)	p/f (%)	no p/f (%)
1. Have you ever taken a course p/f?			
a. yes	50	100	0
b. no	50	0	100
* 2. How many?			
a. 1	21	42	
b. 2	14	28	
c. 3	7	14	
d. 4	6	12	
e. 5	1	3	
f. 6	0	0	
g. 7	0	0	
h. 8	1	1	
i. none	50	0	100
3. Do you plan to take any (further) courses p/f?			
a. yes	56	73	39
b. no	40	22	58
c. don't know	4	5	3
4. (If no to No. 3 or No. 1) Why not?			
a. I am not concerned about the effects on my GPA.	5	4	6
b. I put just as much time and effort into the course anyway.	4	4	4

*Asterisked items were asked only if a student had taken a course p/f.

Question	Total Sample (%)	p/f (%)	no p/f (%)
4. (con't.)			
c. I don't feel that evaluation in p/f terms differentiates enough between students.	3	0	5
d. I want the evaluation to reflect the actual work I've put into the course.	6	0	13
e. Being evaluated p/f did not make me feel less competitive or pressured.	0	0	0
f. Grades are meaningless.	3	0	7
g. Other (These responses are tallied in Table C, Appendix.)	39	13	65
i. yes (to No. 1 & No. 3) or don't know (to No. 3)	40	77	0
j. don't know	0	1	0
blank		1	

5-8. How important do you feel the following purposes of the p/f system should be:

5. The p/f system should increase the student's freedom to take courses in areas where he has had little previous experience or which he might not otherwise investigate since he need not worry about adverse effects to his GPA.

a. very important	66	74	58
b. somewhat important	26	22	30
c. somewhat unimportant	6	4	9
d. very unimportant	1	0	1
e. no answer	1		1

Question	Total Sample (%)	p/f (%)	no p/f (%)
6. The p/f system <u>should</u> give the student a course where he will not need to put forth a great deal of effort, so as to lighten a heavy load.			
a. very important	16	23	10
b. somewhat important	32	32	31
c. somewhat unimportant	38	37	39
d. very unimportant	14	8	19
7. The p/f system <u>should</u> permit the student to take a course that he needs, but has little interest in, without expending too much effort or damaging his GPA.			
a. very important	29	31	28
b. somewhat important	40	41	38
c. somewhat unimportant	24	22	26
d. very unimportant	7	6	8
8. The p/f system <u>should</u> help the student avoid competitive pressure.			
a. very important	33	47	19
b. somewhat important	34	31	38
c. somewhat unimportant	25	18	32
d. very unimportant	7	4	10
9-12. How important do you feel the following purposes of the p/f system <u>actually</u> are:			
9. The p/f system increases the student's freedom to take courses in areas where he has had <u>little</u> previous experience or which he might <u>not</u> otherwise investigate since he need not worry about adverse effects to his GPA.			
a. very important	49	53	47
b. somewhat important	32	31	32
c. somewhat unimportant	16	17	16
d. very unimportant	3	0	5
10. The p/f system gives the student a course where he will not need to put forth a great deal of effort, so as to lighten a heavy load.			
a. very important	36	50	23
b. somewhat important	42	40	44
c. somewhat unimportant	18	8	29
d. very unimportant	3	3	4

Question	Total Sample (%)	p/f (%)	no p/f (%)
11. The p/f system permits the student to take a course that he needs, but has little interest in, without expending too much effort or damaging his GPA.			
a. very important	40	44	36
b. somewhat important	41	36	45
c. somewhat unimportant	12	12	13
d. very unimportant	7	9	5
12. The p/f system helps the student avoid competitive pressure.			
a. very important	31	45	18
b. somewhat important	45	41	49
c. somewhat unimportant	21	12	30
d. very unimportant	2	1	3
e. no answer		1	
13. Should professors know if you are taking a course p/f?			
a. yes	15	12	19
b. no	84	88	79
c. don't know	1	0	1
14. Do you believe professors <u>are usually</u> aware of which students in their classes are taking the course p/f?			
a. most of the time	14	18	10
b. some of the time	59	65	52
c. rarely	23	17	30
d. don't know	4	0	8
15. If a professor <u>is</u> aware of which students are taking a course p/f, how much does this influence his treatment of these students?			
a. a great deal	10	9	12
b. some	55	58	52
c. a little	22	23	21
d. not at all	10	10	10
e. don't know	3	0	5
16. Do you believe professors are harder or easier on p/f students?			
a. harder	36	41	32
b. no difference	53	54	52
c. easier	6	3	9
d. don't know	5	3	6

Question		Total Sample (%)	p/f (%)	no p/f (%)
*17.	How does the effort you put into a p/f course compare to the effort you would have expended had you been taking it for a grade?			
	a. a little more	4		
	b. about the same	26		
	c. a little less	51		
	d. much less	14		
	e. varies; no general trend	5		
	f. no answer	0		100
*18.	How does your class attendance in p/f courses compare to your attendance in graded courses?			
	a. a little more	3		
	b. about the same	56		
	c. a little less	28		
	d. much less	13		
	e. varies; no general trend	0		
	f. no answer	0		100
*19.	How competitive do you feel in p/f courses as compared to graded courses?			
	a. a little more	3		
	b. about the same	23		
	c. a little less	36		
	d. much less	35		
	e. varies; no general trend	4		
	f. no answer	0		100
*20.	How does your level of general satisfaction with p/f courses compare to your satisfaction with graded courses?			
	a. much more satisfied	8		
	b. somewhat more	12		
	c. about the same	41		
	d. somewhat less	28		
	e. much less	4		
	f. varies; no general trend	6		
	g. don't know or no answer	1		100

Question	Total Sample (%)	p/f (%)	no p/f (%)
*21. How does the information that you have gained from p/f courses compare to that from graded courses?			
a. much more		5	
b. somewhat more		12	
c. about the same		55	
d. somewhat less		21	
e. much less		1	
f. varies; no general trend		5	
g. don't know or no answer		1	100
*22. How much and what kind of an effect have your p/f courses had on your approach to your major field?			
a. very positive		9	
b. somewhat positive		24	
c. little effect		60	
d. somewhat negative		4	
e. very negative		1	
f. no answer		1	100
23. What effect has the p/f system had on academic standards at I. U.?			
a. raised	11	13	10
b. no change	71	73	69
c. lowered	16	13	19
d. no answer	1	1	1
*24. What types of courses have you taken p/f?			
a. courses that would be part of my program anyway		19	
b. courses unrelated to my major field of study		45	
c. both a & b		36	
d. none		0	100
25. Sex			
a. female	53	55	52
b. male	47	45	48

Question	Total Sample (%)	p/f (%)	no p/f (%)
26. What year are you in?			
a. freshman	13	5	22
b. sophomore	25	22	27
c. junior	29	42	14
d. senior	20	26	14
e. graduate student	14	5	22

From the response data it can be inferred that the general student attitude toward the p/f option is favorable. Over half of the students intend to take courses p/f in the future. Those who do not have such intentions gave reasons such as no available electives, graduate student status, need for a good GPA, lack of concern for effects on GPA, and desire to have grades reflect the effort the student would expend. /Student Questions (SQ) 3 & 4/

Regarding the ideal purposes of the p/f system, most students felt it should increase the student's freedom to take courses in areas outside his major interests or previous experience. Few felt that a very important purpose of p/f options was to lighten the course load by providing a minimum-effort course. About two thirds thought that the p/f system should make it possible for a student to take courses he needs but which hold little interest for him, while requiring less effort and affording less risk to his GPA. About two thirds also felt the p/f system should reduce competitive pressure. (SQ 5 through 8)

The reasons students gave for taking a course p/f often differed from their identification of the ideal purpose of the system. Only 80% of the students felt their freedom in selecting courses was actually increased by the p/f option, although 92% thought freedom to select was an important reason for having the p/f system. The other three purposes (lightening course loads; completing required, low-interest courses without risk; avoiding competitive pressure) were viewed as being more effective in practice than they had been considered as ideal purposes. (SQ 5 through 12)

Although 84% of the students said professors should not know if a student is taking a course p/f, 14% believed professors were aware most of the time, 59% some of the time, and only 23% believed professors rarely knew which students were using the p/f option. Most students thought that if a professor is aware of which students were exercising the p/f option, this influences his treatment of them to some degree. However, only 36% thought professors were harder on p/f students; 53% believed there was no difference in treatment of p/f and other students, and 6% believed they were easier on p/f students. (SQ 13 through 16)

Seventy-one percent of the students said the p/f system had not changed academic standards at I. U.; 11% thought standards had been raised and 16% believed they were lowered. (SQ 23)

The nine items asked of students who had taken at least one course p/f indicated that these students believed they put forth somewhat less effort and that they achieved results in p/f courses

about equivalent to effort and results in courses regularly graded. While 4% of this group thought their effort was greater, and 26% about the same, as in other courses, 51% put forth a little less, and 14% much less effort in p/f courses. This means that almost two thirds of students in p/f courses did put forth less effort than they did in non-p/f courses. (SQ 17)

Class attendance also may be influenced by the p/f option. Three percent of the students rated their attendance greater, 56% the same, 28% a little less, 13% much less. (SQ 18)

However, the effects of p/f on competition are perceived as generally relaxing. Thirty-five percent of the p/f students feel much less competitive, 36% a little less; 23% felt equally competitive in p/f courses. Only 3% felt more competitive. (SQ 19)

Forty-one percent reported their level of satisfaction with p/f courses to be about the same as with graded courses, while 20% were more and 32% less satisfied. Information gained was believed by 55% to be about the same as in regular courses, by 17% to be greater, and by 22% less. Students believed that their approach to their major field was affected by p/f courses. Nine percent thought the effect on their majors was very positive, 24% somewhat positive, 60% of little effect, 4% somewhat negative, and 1% very negative. (SQ 20 through 22)

Departments in which students had taken p/f courses were varied. In general areas the frequencies are given in Table 3. (For a complete listing, consult Table B in the Appendix.)

Table 3. Frequency of P/F Courses, General Categories

Area	Number of Students Who Took p/f Courses	% of Students Who Took p/f Courses
Business	4	2.9
Social Sciences	42	30.9
Philosophy & Religion	8	5.8
Languages	17	12.5
Natural Science	12	8.8
Fine Arts	10	7.4
Education	10	7.4
English-Journalism-Speech	13	9.6
HPER	14	10.3
Other	6	4.4

Students who had taken courses p/f differed in some attitudes from those who had not (totals in Table 2). Experience with the system had a generally favorable effect. Seventy-three percent of those who had taken p/f courses intended to do so in the future, whereas only 39% of those who had not taken a course p/f planned to do so. (SQ 3) Increased freedom to select courses and avoidance of competitive pressure were viewed as very important ideal purposes of the system by higher percentages of students who had p/f experience than by those who had no experience. (SQ 5 and 8) The four actual purposes mentioned in the questionnaire

were generally viewed as being more important by p/f students than by non-p/f students. The most striking difference was with respect to whether the system helps the student avoid competitive pressure. Forty-five percent of the p/f students, compared to 18% of the others, said that reduced competition was a very important purpose in practice. (SQ 9 through 12)

The majority of both p/f and non-p/f students (88%, 79%) agreed that professors should not know whether a student is taking the course p/f. However, more p/f than non-p/f students feel professors are in fact aware most, or some, of the time. Forty-one percent of the p/f students, and 32% of the others, believed professors are harder on p/f students. (SQ 13 through 16) Clearly a sizable number of students (at least a third) believe they may incur greater work in the p/f system.

There were fewer freshmen in the p/f group (5%) than in the non-p/f group (22%). Some of the freshmen indicated that they avoided the p/f option because they wanted to see how well they could do in graded courses, and some said they were not aware of the p/f option. A similar imbalance (5%, 22%) existed among graduate students sampled; their most common reason for avoiding p/f was that courses in their program could not be taken p/f. (SQ 26, and response g to SQ 4)

FACULTY REACTION TO THE PASS-FAIL OPTION

The faculty was polled by means of a structured personal interview consisting of 12 specific questions and a request for comments. The questions were generated by a team of students and faculty.

Faculty were sampled at the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor and from the schools of Arts and Sciences, Education, Business, Music, HPER, Law, and Public and Environmental Affairs. The number of faculty selected from each rank and school was roughly proportional to the size of the school and the relative number of faculty members at each rank. Within these constraints an attempt was made to select a random sample. A total of thirty faculty members were selected and interviewed. Their responses are recorded in Table 4 on page 18.

Two thirds of the faculty at Indiana University favored retention of the p/f system. (Faculty Question (FQ) 3) Eighteen percent advocated abolishing p/f, and 16 percent declined to answer the question. The latter 16 percent appeared to be composed of those who feel strongly about introducing certain changes in the p/f system since this 16 percent most frequently proposed specific changes in the system.

At first it seemed contradictory that most faculty favored retention of the p/f system since 78 percent felt p/f did not affect or even lowered academic standards. (FQ 5) However, there are at least four reasons for this: (1) Under p/f more nonmajors are

induced into certain courses, (2) p/f lowers instances of cheating and plagiarism, (3) p/f reduces student anxiety and (4) p/f improves student-professor relations. Although only a minority of the professors agreed with the first three reasons for favoring p/f, (FQ 7, 2, and 8) the culminating effect of different subsets of professors favoring p/f for different reasons may have led to the vote for retention of p/f. The fourth reason was given by several professors when asked for their comments on p/f.

The rationale given for opposition to the p/f system include the following: lowers obvious indices of performance, does not work equally well for all students, does not classify D as a failing grade, grades are not always transferable, creates problems in awarding scholarships, and provides no solution for those who favor total abolition of grading systems.

The resemblance of the faculty questionnaire to the student one made possible some comparisons of student and faculty perceptions of the p/f system. Professors tend to be unaware of students' p/f enrollment status (61% never aware, 33% occasionally) whereas students (73%) feel the professors are "aware some or most of the time." The professor's ability to identify p/f students in his class may be overestimated by students. (FQ 1 and SQ 14)

A majority (55%) of the professors who gave their opinion felt attendance to be lower under p/f. (FQ 12) Forty percent indicated attendance had not changed, and five percent felt it had

improved. On the other hand, the majority of the students (56%) indicated their class attendance was about the same, although 28% did say it was a little less, and 13% stated their attendance was "much less." (SQ 18) Perhaps the conspicuous absence of this 13% and occasional absences of 28%, of the p/f students led the faculty to conclude that attendance had decreased when in fact the attendance pattern for very many of the students had not changed.

Sixty percent of the faculty who expressed an opinion did not feel they had more nonmajors in their courses due to the p/f system. (FQ 7) However, 81% of the students interviewed indicated they took at least one p/f course which was unrelated to their majors as opposed to 19% who only took p/f courses closely linked to their majors. (SQ 24) Such a large percentage of students using p/f for unrelated courses does make it seem that p/f encourages students to move away from their majors in selecting nonrequired courses.

The majority of students agreed with professors that course requirements are the same for p/f students as for non p/f's. One hundred percent of the faculty maintain they never alter their requirements for p/f students, and a majority of the students (54%) seem to agree by indicating professors are neither harder nor easier on p/f students. (SQ 16) Many of the faculty (54%) and students (73%) agreed that academic standards were not affected by the p/f

option. (FQ 5 and SQ 23) On the other hand, students and professors also agreed that student competitiveness and performance are slightly lower under the p/f system. (FQ 6 and SQ 19)

Table 4. Faculty Interview Questionnaire

Question	Response	
1. Do you ever know if the student is taking your course p/f or not?	frequently	6%
	occasionally	33%
	never	61%
a. If you know, do you alter your course requirements for the students using the p/f option?	no	100%
	yes	0%
b. If you know, how would you rank your evaluation of students using p/f?	easier	9%
	same	78%
	no opinion	13%
2. In your opinion, do you think p/f lessens instances of cheating and plagiarism?	yes	27%
	no	27%
	no opinion	46%
3. Should it or should it not be retained as part of the University's grading system?	yes	66%
	no	18%
	no opinion	16%
4. In your opinion, do you feel that the whole grading system should be abolished?	yes	6%
	no	81%
	no opinion	16%
5. In your opinion, how does p/f affect University academic standards?	raise	6%
	lower	24%
	no change	54%
	no opinion	16%
6. In your opinion, do you feel students who use the p/f system are as competitive in their classroom work?	more	9%
	less	54%
	neither	6%
	no opinion	31%

Question	Response	
7. Do you feel you have students from outside your specialization due to p/f?	yes	27%
	no	39%
	no opinion	34%
8. Do you feel students suffer anxiety due to the p/f system?	yes	18%
	no	48%
	no opinion	34%
9. Do you feel p/f lowers or raises your students performance?	raises	9%
	lowers	54%
	neither	6%
	no opinion	31%
10. Would you prefer a student auditing your course rather than use p/f?	yes	27%
	no	54%
	no opinion	19%
11. Do you feel students taking p/f study less?	yes	48%
	no	15%
	no opinion	34%
12. In your opinion, how would you rate class attendance for students using p/f?	better	3%
	worse	33%
	same	18%
	no opinion	46%

GRADE ACHIEVEMENT OF PASS-FAIL STUDENTS

At the chose of the semester, faculty turn in letter grades for all students enrolled. Since faculty are not advised which students are taking courses on a p/f basis and which are not, letter grades are reported for each student. For p/f students all passing grades (D and higher) are converted to P's, all failing grades to F's by the Registrar.

Since faculty report letter grades for all students, it is possible to compare the distribution of letter grades awarded to p/f students with the letter grades awarded to the students who were regularly enrolled. Such a comparison might be used to reflect the relative status of p/f students in any given class.

Three large classes were chosen for the above comparison: Sociology S161, Psychology P101, and Mathematics M118. The comparative distributions for students who completed the courses are given in Table 5. Here we can see that p/f students tend to range slightly lower than a distribution of students regularly enrolled in the class. In each course there are noticeably more A's among regularly enrolled students than among p/f's. P/f's appear to have received consistently more C's than regularly enrolled students, while the proportion of D grades is appreciably greater for p/f's in Sociology S161 and less in Mathematics M118.

The average grade for p/f students in each class was clearly lower than that for regularly enrolled students. In each case the difference was about a third of a grade point. This difference is not a large, practical one. When one realizes that majors in the departments represented will not be in the p/f group, the difference in average grades between regular and p/f students is even less conspicuous. It at least appears that the difference in p/f grades and grades for regularly enrolled students is not one that cannot be accounted for by differences in objectives of the two groups of students.

Table 5. Distribution of Letter Grades for Regularly Enrolled and P/F Students in Three Large Classes

Class	Regularly Enrolled			Pass-Fail	
	Letter Grades	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Soc. S161	A	98	14.0	2	11.8
	B	224	31.9	2	11.8
	C	247	35.2	7	41.2
	D	109	15.5	6	35.3
	F	24	3.4	0	0.0
Mean	2.37			2.00	
Psych. P101	A	189	16.8	0	0.0
	B	352	31.2	3	25.0
	C	382	33.9	7	58.3
	D	148	13.1	2	16.7
	F	56	5.0	0	0.0
Mean	2.42			2.08	
Math. M118	A	224	31.7	2	9.1
	B	197	27.9	7	31.8
	C	194	27.4	12	54.5
	D	58	8.2	1	4.5
	F	34	4.8	0	0.0
Mean	2.73			2.45	

CONCLUSIONS

The study supports the following conclusions:

1. Many students use the p/f option, but typically only for two or three courses.

2. Persons who have used the p/f option once are more apt to use it in the future than are students who have not used p/f.

3. Students believe the p/f option should expand freedom to select electives, but they do not use it this way as expansively as they might. Although some faculty believe p/f has increased the number of nonmajors in their classes, the majority do not believe the increase is appreciable.

4. Although students claim that the opportunity to take a needed, but low interest, course p/f (so as not to jeopardize their grade-point average) is an unimportant reason for the option, many students do in fact use p/f in this manner.

5. Students believe that instructors do know many of the p/f enrollees in their classes, and this knowledge changes the instructors' treatment of students. Faculty, however, seldom know which students are p/f.

6. Students feel that they probably put forth less effort on p/f than non-p/f courses, and that their class attendance is probably a little lower. Faculty support this conclusion.

7. Students and faculty agree that the p/f option probably lowers competiveness among students.

8. Students tend to be slightly less "satisfied" with courses taken under p/f than with other courses and believe they get slightly less information from them. The faculty also believe this is true.

9. Students do not believe p/f lowers academic standards. While some faculty disagree, others believe that the student's sampling of a wider area of knowledge may compensate for lower levels of performance in a given course.

10. Faculty are not sure that p/f reduces incidents of plagiarism and cheating, but believe it does reduce student anxiety.

11. Students registered as p/f do not achieve as high grades as students enrolled under a regular procedure. However, the p/f group does not include majors and does include a number of students who are taking courses clearly out of their fields. This may account for the lower grade achievement of p/f students.

12. The general feeling of students and faculty is that the p/f option should be continued.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Table A: Stated Majors by Departments of Students Interviewed

Major Stated	Number of Students Interviewed		
	Total	Taken course(s) p/f Yes	No
Undecided	8	3	5
Art	2	0	2
Art Education	1	1	0
Anthropology	4	4	0
Biology	11	3	8
Business	13	7	6
Chemistry	3	2	1
Computer Science	1	0	1
Counseling	1	0	1
Dental Hygiene	1	0	1
East Asian Languages	1	0	1
Education	10	7	3
Educ. Psychology	1	1	0
Elementary Education	5	3	2
English	4	0	4
Fine Arts	2	1	1
French	1	0	1
Geology	1	0	1
German	1	0	1
History	4	1	3
Home Economics	2	0	2

Table A--Continued

	Total	Taken course(s) p/f	
		Yes	No
HPER	3	2	1
Independent Learning	1	0	1
Journalism	1	1	0
Mathematics	3	2	1
Music	13	6	7
Music Education	2	2	0
Nursing	3	1	2
Philosophy	2	1	1
Political Science	13	6	7
Prelaw	1	0	1
Premed	7	4	3
Psychology	9	7	2
Radio and TV	1	0	1
Recreation	1	1	0
Religion	3	2	1
Russian	3	2	1
Slavics	1	1	0
Social Service	2	1	1
Social Studies	1	1	0
Sociology	7	5	2
Spanish	3	3	0
Special Education	1	1	0
Student Personnel	1	0	1
Theatre	3	2	1
Urban Education	1	0	1

Table B: Courses Taken P/F

Course Stated	Frequency Among Students Interviewed
Afro-American Studies	2
Anthropology	3
Biology	4
Business	4
Chemistry	2
Classics	1
Drama	1
Economics	1
Education	10
English	9
Environmental J Course	1
Fine Arts	6
Folklore	2
French	6
Geography	2
German	3
Geology	1
History	5
Home Economics	1
Honors	1
HPER	15
Journalism	2

Table B--Continued

Course Stated	Frequency Among Students Interviewed
Languages	5
Latin	1
Mathematics	3
Music	3
Philosophy	5
Political Science	2
Psychology	15
Religion	3
ROTC	1
Russian	1
Science	1
Sociology	11
Spanish	1
Speech	2

Table C: A Frequency Count of Reasons Given by Students for Not Taking Courses P/F

Those students tallied here selected the open-ended response listed as "other" (response g, question 4) since none of the reasons (a-f) listed with question 4 appeared adequate to them.

	Total	P/F	Non-p/f
No electives left in program	15	8	7
Uninformed regarding p/f option	8	0	8
Graduate students can't	6	0	6
No opportunity yet	5	0	5
Need for good GPA	3	0	3
Wanted to determine grades with full course load (freshmen)	2	0	2
Can't take requirements p/f	1	0	1
Use only if load is heavy or course is unrelated to program	1	0	1
Depends on course, GPA effect	1	0	1
P/f converted to grades by dental school	1	0	1
No need yet	1	0	1
I.U. not prestigious enough for p/f to mean anything	1	0	1
Haven't found p/f courses for credit	1	0	1
Rest of electives count as graduate credits if not taken p/f	1	1	0
Never get around to it	1	0	1